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C O N F I D E N T I A L MONTEVIDEO 000004

SIPDIS

FOR WHA/BSC DASCHBACH AND CROFT

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/06/2019  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [KPAL](#) [IR](#) [UR](#)  
SUBJECT: URUGUAY: GOU AND URUGUAYAN PRESS KEEP BALANCE ON  
GAZA VIOLENCE

REF: A. ASUNCION 0006  
[B](#). 08 CARACAS 1784  
[C](#). 08 BRASILIA 1685  
[D](#). 08 LA PAZ 2671

Classified By: DCM ROBIN MATTHEWMAN, FOR REASON 1.4(B)

[1](#). (U) Both the Government of Uruguay and most Uruguayan media have taken a balanced view of the situation in Gaza. The GOU's public comments have been limited to a single press release by the MFA December 29 that stressed the GOU's concern regarding the escalation of violence and urged all parties to cease hostilities (see para 5). Outside the administration, a group of senators signed a statement expressing agreement with Mercosur's declaration calling for a cessation of all violence (Ref A).

[2](#). (C) Israeli ambassador to Uruguay Yoel Barnea told DCM that he had a positive conversation January 7 with acting FM Pedro Vaz. Vaz said that three principles guide Uruguay's foreign policy: compliance with international law; human rights; and solutions by peaceful means. Uruguay's hope is that those principles are applied in the Middle East, Vaz said. Barnea explained the reasons the GOI felt it had to go into Gaza, the results it seeks, and Israel's regrets over the loss of innocent life.

[3](#). (U) All local print, radio, and television sources are providing ample daily coverage of the conflict in Gaza with featured press in the international news sections and special correspondent reports in the morning and evening news. In general, the press laments the violence but supports Israel's right to defend itself. Only the far-left daily La Republica has evinced a strong sympathy with the Palestinians and condemned Israel's actions. Many media outlets identify the coming U.S. administration, specifically president-elect Obama and Secretary designate Hillary Clinton, as the only possible mediators to broker peace in Gaza.

[4](#). (C) Comment: Uruguay's measured tones on this subject demonstrate its pragmatism and the value Uruguayans place on a balanced foreign policy. Under FM Fernandez, the government has worked hard to strengthen its relationship with both Israel and the Arab world. This underlines again the important role that Uruguay plays in the region and the world.

[5](#). (U) Informal translation of the MFA's December 29th public statement:

The Government of the Oriental Republic of Uruguay expresses its deep sorrow and concern for the conflicts developing in the Middle East and the Gaza Strip, and deplores the escalation of violence that has caused innumerable victims, especially in the civilian population. These acts damage and put at risk efforts toward a negotiated and peaceful solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The Government of the Oriental Republic of Uruguay urges the parties involved to make all necessary efforts to stop all types of hostilities, and to effect a truce that will permit the re-establishment of a constructive dialogue in search of a negotiated solution that will lead to security, stability, and the peaceful co-existence of the peoples of the region.  
End translation.

Baxter